

A JOINT MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE LITERACY, COLLABORATION AND EDUCATION.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has a long and distinguished history in scientific research, including in the fields of astronomy and space science, and continues the tradition as a state where much cutting-edge scientific research is conducted; and

WHEREAS, astronomer Alan Hale, a native of Alamogordo, New Mexico, a resident of Cloudcroft, New Mexico and director of the southwest institute for space research, co-discovered comet Hale-Bopp in 1995, which generated much public interest when it appeared in the nighttime skies two years later; and

WHEREAS, in response to numerous "controversies" surrounding the comet at the time of its appearance, Hale stressed the importance of science education and of scientists diligently working toward alleviating scientific illiteracy; and

WHEREAS, Hale urges everyone to look at the "wonders of the universe" and to use the inspiration they thereby receive to confront the many challenges facing our society today; and

WHEREAS, in that spirit, Hale led two delegations of Americans on "science diplomacy" expeditions to Iran and thus utilized astronomy as a tool to foster improved relations with the citizens of that nation; and

WHEREAS, Hale also journeyed to Zimbabwe and, through astronomy, has had the opportunity to issue comforting and encouraging statements in support of the citizens of that nation; and

WHEREAS, inspired by these and other similar experiences, Hale developed the Earthrise project in 2002 to inspire and encourage the next generation of students around the world to collaborate in efforts to investigate the mysteries of the universe; and

WHEREAS, Earthrise takes its name from the images of Earth taken by the Apollo astronauts, which reveal Earth as "a small jewel in space with no political

1 boundaries"; and

2 WHEREAS, Earthrise founders hope that participants will learn to "share in  
3 their common humanity and grow up to see their counterparts in other countries as  
4 friends and colleagues";

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
6 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Alan Hale and the Earthrise project be commended for  
7 their contributions to science, science education and cultural understanding and that  
8 scientific research, the improvement of science education and an emphasis on public  
9 science literacy and science as a tool for mutual understanding be supported and  
10 made a priority in  
11 New Mexico.

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